



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

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DOMINICAN SENTENCED TO 18 MONTHS IN PRISON FOR HUMAN SMUGGLING FOLLOWING AN ICE INVESTIGATION

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico—U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced that a Dominican man convicted for human smuggling was sentenced here yesterday by a federal judge to 18 months in prison.

Manolo Collazo, 44, also known as Gilberto Francisco, was arrested by ICE on June 15, 2005 when he tried to board a flight from San Juan, Puerto Rico to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with a group of 11 illegal immigrants from the Dominican Republic.

ICE agents were able to identify Collazo as the human smuggler. Further investigation revealed that Collazo was responsible for providing fraudulent documents to the illegal immigrants.

“The conviction and sentencing of this man proves, once more, that we continue our efforts to bring unscrupulous smugglers to justice,” said Lydia St. John-Mellado, acting special agent-in-charge of ICE in Puerto Rico. “We are determined, with the full support of our Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice partners, to stop human smuggling in our jurisdiction.”

Collazo is in federal custody and will serve his sentence at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico. He will be deported from the United States upon the completion of his term in prison.

Disrupting and dismantling human smuggling and trafficking rings has been a top priority for ICE since the agency was established in March 2003, given the potential threat that these organizations pose both to national security and public safety. With ICE’s broad authorities for enforcing immigration and customs laws and its expertise in financial investigations, the agency is able to pursue human smuggling organizations more aggressively than ever before. As a result, ICE agents arrested more than 1,630 human smugglers nationwide in fiscal year 2004.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.

